

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

August 25, 2009

Prison Overcrowding

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, crime rates have decreased as incarceration has increased. Forty-four million crimes were reported by Americans in 1973 which dropped to 23 million by 2007 despite an increase in population by 75 million. An even steeper drop by 59 percent occurred in violent crimes from the mid-1990's to 2005 (more than 51 crimes of violence per 1,000 US residents in 1994 to 21 in 2005.)

Despite the above, the State proposes to curtail the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's budget by \$1.2 billion. Additionally, a panel of three judges has recently issued a ruling concerning prison overcrowding which poses a significant threat to public safety.

One option the State is considering to reduce the prison population involves placing parolees on electronic monitoring which will short circuit public safety because state parole is not adequately staffed to respond to violations. When a parolee on electronic monitoring violates the terms of the program, a signal is sent to a contracted vendor, which may be out-of-state or out of the country. That vendor will then notify state parole of the violation. Since state parole is significantly understaffed, the burden to respond when contracted vendors report violations will fall on the shoulders of local law enforcement already stretched thin due to budget cuts statewide.

A concerted effort is necessary to prevent a shift in responsibility for state prisoners to local government or alternatively to minimize its impact through various concessions such as receiving adequate funding similar to the State's Youthful Offender Block Grant program which reimburses Counties for retaining youth in our Probation system who would otherwise be the responsibility of the State.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office in conjunction with the Sheriff, District Attorney, and Chief Probation Officer to serve as the County's lead representatives to collectively work with the appropriate state officials to:

MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

ANTONOVICH _____

KNABE _____

1. Inform the State of the potential operational and fiscal impacts on the County's criminal justice agencies as the state considers a \$1.2 billion budget curtailment to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and prepares a plan to reduce its prison population in response to the recent ruling by a three judge panel;
2. Emphasize and advocate for a solution that promotes public safety and avoids shifting any responsibility to local government or, alternatively, minimizes any negative impact on local governments by accompanying any shift in responsibility with adequate resources similar to the State's Youthful Offender Block Grant program; and,
3. Provide the Board with monthly status updates in writing.

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MDA:apg